

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAJ-01 IO-11 SAM-01 /082 W

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R 261511Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 498

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION USBERLIN UNN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMCONSUL MUNICH

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 2975

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, UR

SUBJECT: LOCAL JEWISH REACTION TO BREZHNEV'S CONGRESS SPEECH

REF: MOSCOW 2819, 2828, 2829 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. DISSIDENT MUSCOVITE JEWS TELL US THAT BREZHNEV'S
SPEECH WAS Milder THAN THEY HAD FEARED. IT GAVE THEM NO GROUNDS
FOR EXPECTING IMPROVEMENTS, BUT EQUALLY DID NOT IN THEIR OPINION
PRESAGE A CRACKDOWN IN AREAS OF INTEREST TO THEM.
END SUMMARY.

2. SEVERAL MUSCOVITE DISSIDENT JEWS HAVE
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GIVEN US THEIR REACTIONS TO BREZHNEV'S CONGRESS SPEECH

(REFTELS). THEIR GENERAL REACTION IS ONE OF RELIEF THAT IT WAS NOT HARSHER IN TONE AND OF PLEASURE THAT THE JEWS WERE NOT SINGLED OUT. THEY WERE DISTRESSED THAT NO EASING IN CULTURAL AND EMIGRATION POLICY WAS FORESHADOWED.

3. OUR SOURCES AGREE THAT THE RELATIVELY CORDIAL TREATMENT ACCORDED TO U.S./ SOVIET RELATIONS IS A GOOD SIGN FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF JEWISH INTERESTS. THEY SEE THE TREATMENT OF THE U.S. AS EVIDENCE THAT SOVIET JEWS DESIRING TO EMIGRATE WILL NOT BE TREATED IN A WORSE FASHION THAN IS NOW THE CASE. AT THE SAME TIME THEY DID NOT SEE IN THE SECTION DEVOTED TO THE U.S. ANY INDICATION OF SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO IMPROVE THE TREATMENT OF JEWS IN RETURN FOR AMERICAN CONCESSIONS IN OTHER AREAS.

4. OUR SOURCES PERCEIVE THE TREATMENT OF THE MIDDLE EAST AS FORESHADOWING NO CHANGE IN PRESENT SOVIET POLICY TOWARD ISRAEL. ONE SOURCE, WITH GOOD CONNECTIONS IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY, SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN A RUMOR THAT BREZHNEV WOULD SIGNAL MORE SUPPORT FOR THE ARAB CAUSE. THERE IS A GENERAL RELIEF THAT THIS WAS NOT THE CASE.

5. NATURALLY OUR SOURCES STUDIED WITH PARTICULAR ATTENTION THE SECTION OF BREZHNEV'S SPEECH ON DOMESTIC POLICY. THE CONSENSUS IS THAT NOTHING HAS CHANGED IN THIS AREA. THERE IS NO INDICATION OF A CRACKDOWN ON CULTURAL, ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS MATTERS ALTHOUGH EQUALLY THERE WERE NO INDICATIONS OF ANY EASING IN THESE AREAS. THE REFERENCES TO THE SOVIET JUDICIAL AND POLICE ORGANS STRUCK OUR SOURCES AS STANDARD. THE TWO SENTENCES DEVOTED TO THE KGB APPEARED Milder THAN THEY HAD FEARED.

6. OVERALL, OUR SOURCES SAY THAT THEY WERE IMPRESSED BY BREZHNEV'S OBVIOUS COMMAND OF THE SOVIET POLITICAL SCENE, HIS APPARENT GOOD HEALTH, AND THE ATTEMPT TO PROJECT HIMSELF AS A MODERN, RESPONSIBLE, STATESMANLIKE LEADER OF A MATURE, GREAT POWER, A COUNTRY AWARE OF ITS POSITION AND THE DEFERENCES OWED IT, BUT ONE THAT WAS PREPARED TO DO ITS SHARE TO MAINTAIN WORLD ORDER.

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